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News Release

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Park Rapids man indicted for wire fraud, money laundering, growing marijuana

A 36-year-old Park Rapids man was indicted last week in federal court in connection with a scheme to defraud a mortgage company out of money, as well as growing more than 100 marijuana plants.

Eric Wayne Moen was charged Aug. 18 with one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud, one count of money laundering and one count of manufacturing marijuana. He made his initial appearance Aug. 21.

Moen's indictment alleges that from Aug. 1 through Nov. 28, 2005, he conspired with others to obtain the funds to purchase a single-family home by means of false and fraudulent pretenses.

Specifically, Moen, a licensed real estate agent at the time, is alleged to have conspired to misrepresent the employment status of a borrower in connection with a mortgage. As part of the scheme, \$641,840.63 was transferred on Nov. 28 via interstate wire from a mortgage company to a title company. Then, on Dec. 1, 2005, Moen allegedly deposited a \$15,650.87 check into his personal account knowing that money was derived from the wire fraud. The residence allegedly purchased via the wire fraud was, the indictment states, subsequently used for a marijuana grow operation.

Co-defendant Kevin Ray Winkelmann, 39, Shorewood, pleaded guilty in August 2008 to one count of conspiracy to commit mail fraud for his role in the mortgage fraud scheme.

The indictment also states that from in or about January 2006 through June 18, 2007, Moen knowingly manufactured 100 or more marijuana plants.

If convicted, Moen faces a potential maximum penalty of 10 years in prison on the money laundering count, 20 years on the conspiracy count and 40 years on the manufacturing count. All

sentences are determined by a federal district court judge.

This case is the result of an investigation by the Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation Division and the United States Postal Inspection Service. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney David M. Genrich.

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An indictment is a determination by a grand jury that there is probable cause to believe that offenses have been committed by a defendant. A defendant, of course, is presumed innocent until he or she pleads guilty or is proven guilty at trial.